

**LATIN PLAYS FOR
STUDENT PERFORMANCES
AND READING**

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Latin Plays for Student Performances and Reading by John J. Schlicher

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JOHN J. SCHLICHER

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AND READING**

UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA

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BY

JOHN J. SCHLICHER

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PREFACE

The plays in this volume have been written chiefly for performances by students and for rapid oral reading by high-school pupils and others in the early stages of Latin study. Translation and previous preparation are of course not excluded, and for this use of the book a vocabulary and brief notes have been added. The object of the plays is to supply the need, which everyone who teaches high-school classes has felt, of easy and varied conversational Latin which shall be fairly substantial and have some connection with the regular reading of the pupils, and shall at the same time be interesting to them as boys and girls.

The necessity for more actual handling of the language than is possible in the authors commonly read in schools is too apparent to require comment. Pupils usually know grammar enough to read, and they frequently have a good vocabulary. What they lack is an experience with the language which will carry them along with enough speed to make it seem a real means of expression; the Latin of the required authors is much too complex and too far removed from the ordinary train of their thinking and speaking to serve this purpose. The slowness of their early reading in Latin deprives them of several advantages which the study of the modern languages offers in large measure. It breaks the continuity of thought from

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sentence to sentence and even from clause to clause, and compels the pupils to begin their task over and over again, with little benefit from what they have read before. With only a small section of the text in their minds, they are of necessity driven back to the dictionary and the grammar at every step, and they fail to get that sense of continuity and momentum which is the life of linguistic expression.

The plays are intended, therefore, to be supplementary to the regular reading of the classroom and, incidentally, to create a more lively interest in the authors themselves and in Roman life. Two of the seven are closely connected with Cæsar, two with Cicero, one with Virgil, and one with Ovid. The vocabulary used in the plays consists of about fifteen hundred words, of which nearly fourteen hundred are found in those portions of Cæsar, Cicero, and Virgil which are usually read. Of the rest, about seventy are so closely connected with these words as to give no additional trouble, and only about fifty are entirely new. These are chiefly the names of various articles and persons occurring in the plays, exclamations, forms of greeting, and the like. The plays are arranged in the order in which they will naturally appeal to the pupil as he proceeds in his course, and they are, to a certain degree, progressive in difficulty. But they are all sufficiently simple to be read without much trouble in the second year, or even at the end of the first. They may incidentally be made to serve as a sort of prospectus of the whole high-school course at a time when many pupils are easily discouraged and inclined to give up the study prematurely as uninteresting.

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When a performance is undertaken, the degree of accuracy which is to be observed in dress, furniture, etc. will depend on time and circumstances and on the inclination of the participants. Information about these matters may be readily obtained from such books as Johnston's "Private Life of the Romans," Gulick's "Life of the Ancient Greeks," and "Harper's Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities" (see especially the articles on *vestis*, *domus*, and *exercitus*, with the cross references to other articles which they contain; also the articles on *cena*, *mola*, and *fons*). Help for the dress of soldiers may also be found in any good illustrated edition of Cæsar. Much valuable information of a practical kind with reference to the various preparations for a performance may be obtained from an article by Professor D. D. Hains, entitled "The Presentation of Classical Plays," in the *Classical Journal* for May, 1914.

When the plays are not performed, but read, an interesting and profitable exercise may be arranged by assigning the parts to the various pupils and having them read these in Latin from the book. Such a reading may be preceded by a certain amount of preparation, so that the meaning will be perfectly clear and the text can be read with appreciation and expression. Those who are thinking of a performance will wish to go through several, if not all, of the plays in this way, before deciding on the one they will present.

The stage directions which have been inserted will often help the pupil to appreciate the situation and to read or speak the lines with more interest and vigor. They are

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intended to be suggestive rather than obligatory, and may be modified for an actual performance to suit the individual performers, the occasion, and the construction of the stage.

To the lists of characters preceding the plays are added, in each instance, the numbers of the scenes in which the characters appear. It will thus be found easy to combine two or more of the shorter parts, and to have them read or spoken by the same pupil if necessary.

The little songs which occur in several of the plays have been set to simple tunes, which are grouped together immediately after the text of the last play.

J. J. S.

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